

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 621
By Fowlkes

A RESOLUTION to honor and recognize the Goats, Music & More Festival, its presenters, its attendees and its goats.

WHEREAS, the members of this General Assembly are 'specially fond of special events that celebrate Tennessee's agricultural heritage; and

WHEREAS, nothing is or could ever be so charmingly pastoral as the goat; and

WHEREAS, goats and their preeminent place in Marshall County's heritage will be celebrated at the Goats, Music & More Festival in Lewisburg on October 11, 2003; and

WHEREAS, dedicated to extolling the many virtues of all goats, but especially the legendary Tennessee Fainting Goat, the Goats, Music & More Festival will feature one of the largest goat shows in the Southeast, or at least Lewisburg; and

WHEREAS, the "Music" featured in the festival's name refers to the all-day music showcase and "pickin'" area at Rock Creek Memorial Park; the "More" includes lots of delicious food, a parade, flea market, arts and crafts fair, and storytellers and other activities for the "kids," but not the goats; and

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WHEREAS, the list of the mighty goat's attributes is both lengthy and impressive: goat's milk products contain a natural enzyme that makes them more easily digestible than cow's milk; soap and beauty products made from goat's milk are prized for their aesthetic values; yarns made from goat's hair - mohair and cashmere - are famous for their luxurious textures; and most importantly in the context of the Volunteer State, goat meat is naturally lean and protein packed; it contains more iron, less than half the calories and a fraction of the fat of beef; and

WHEREAS, approximately 63% of the red meat consumed worldwide is goat meat, which is eaten by 70% of the world's population; it is, therefore, an irrefutable fact that goat is *the* meat of choice, although this fact may "get the goat" of cattlemen and swine and poultry producers; and

WHEREAS, meat goat production is the fastest growing livestock industry in the United States, and Tennessee is second among all states in production; and

WHEREAS, most beloved among Tennesseans is the legendary Tennessee Fainting Goat, which originated in Marshall County circa 1880; and

WHEREAS, the Fainting Goat is also often referred to as the Stiff-Legged Goat, the Wooden-Leg Goat, the Scare Goat and the Nervous Goat, but biologically, it is the Myotonic Goat; and

WHEREAS, Fainting Goats suffer from myotonia congenita, a neuromuscular condition that causes transitory muscle stiffness when a goat is startled; and

WHEREAS, Fainting Goats don't actually faint on cue like some caprine version of Scarlett O'Hara, but when they are startled or surprised their muscles lock up and they sometimes fall over, executing a perfect Chevy Chase impersonation; and

WHEREAS, older Fainters are more adept at leaning against a fence, barn or other immovable object, and thus don't exhibit the aforementioned trait as much as your average novice Fainting Goat; and

WHEREAS, some Nervous Goats are mildly afflicted and only their back legs lock up; these goats are still somewhat mobile when startled, as they drag their hind legs behind them like a politician running from a vote to raise taxes; and

WHEREAS, in addition to the many enviable characteristics of goats in general, Tennessee Fainting Goats have excellent dispositions and are easily kept, not unlike Anna Nicole Smith; and

WHEREAS, Fainting Goats are hardy and have a remarkable resistance to disease, the federal government and other parasites; they are also efficient foragers and will eat almost anything, including Johnson Grass, which was previously thought to be inedible, even by teenagers; and

WHEREAS, Fainting Goats are the original multi-taskers; they can be raised for fiber, meat or milk or as pets and companion animals; and

WHEREAS, Nervous Goats aren't nervous at all when it comes to breeding and the obligations of family, however; they have excellent mothering instincts, are easy kidders and are able to breed year round; and

WHEREAS, the origin of the Tennessee Fainting Goat is a fascinating story that can be traced back to circa 1880, when a Nova Scotian named John Tinsley appeared in Marshall County with "a sacred cow, three nanny goats and a billy goat" in tow; and

WHEREAS, John Tinsley, who "came as a stranger and left as a stranger," was not a particularly admirable, or even sociable, gentleman, but he earned his place in history by owning the four Myotonic Goats upon which the Tennessee Fainting Goat breed was founded; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Tinsley later sold these original Fainters to Dr. H.H. Mayberry of Marshall County for the grand sum of \$36.00, an astonishing \$12.00 more than the Dutch paid for Manhattan, but Dr. Mayberry still got the better deal; and

WHEREAS, from three wise nannies and one ecstatic billy goat, Dr. Mayberry bred and raised numerous other Fainting Goats and sold them throughout Kentucky and Tennessee, thus laying the foundation for the dissemination of the breed throughout the Southeast; and

WHEREAS, as an aside, John Tinsley later moved to Maury County and married a woman named Barnhill; on her farm, he raised an excellent corn crop, and one night after the crop had been harvested, without warning to his wife, he left with his "sacred cow" and was never heard from again, thus proving the old adage: "A sacred cow in hand beats four Fainting Goats eating brush"; and

WHEREAS, most importantly in the context of 21st Century American society, Fainting Goats are politically correct, as some of our most distinguished statesmen raise Nervous Goats, including Representative Joe Fowlkes, Representative Stratton Bone, and former Senator Bob Rochelle, who encourages his large herd of goats to eat more grass than is available in the pasture and then raises their taxes; and

WHEREAS, Chairman Fowlkes has two Nervous Goats in his voluminous herd of four, but sometimes in the finest tradition of the House Judiciary Committee, he asserts that he has four Nervous Goats in his herd of two; and

WHEREAS, on the local political scene, Marshall County Executive Terry Wallace has never personally raised Nervous Goats, but having dealt extensively with the members of the Marshall County Commission for the past 13 years, he is intimately familiar with their stubbornness and other unique personality traits and knows how to deal with them accordingly; and

WHEREAS, Marshall County veterinarians, Doctors Victor and Ray Wakefield, have declared that the Tennessee Fainting Goat is an extremely healthy breed and is thus a menace to the livelihood of veterinarians everywhere; and

WHEREAS, a diet of Johnson Grass, young saplings and saw briars is sufficient to keep a Fainting Goat both healthy and happy, and therein lies the solution to Tennessee's budget problems; and

WHEREAS, this General Assembly would like to suggest to the Governor that the State could save thousands of dollars by replacing the groundskeepers at the Governor's Mansion with a mere ten Nervous Goats; and

WHEREAS, ten Nervous Goats can be purchased for less than \$500, and they would do an excellent job of keeping down the grass and weeds, without adding appreciably to the amount of manure generated at the Mansion; and

WHEREAS, as an added bonus, the State would not have to pay Social Security or Medicare taxes on Nervous Goats, nor would they be eligible to participate in the Tennessee Consolidated Retirement System; and

WHEREAS, Fainting Goats are nonpartisan by nature, and are owned by Democrats and Republicans alike; it's difficult to tell a liberal Nervous Goat from a conservative Nervous Goat, the primary difference being that while liberal Nervous Goats like to tax and spend, conservative Nervous Goats prefer to borrow and spend; and

WHEREAS, Nervous Goats are also non-denominational, and it's difficult to tell a Baptist Nervous Goat from a Methodist Nervous Goat; however, some members of the Church of Christ prefer to keep their Nervous Goats far away from pianos, as musical instruments seem to make Church of Christ Nervous Goats even more nervous; some Church of Christ goat producers even refuse to raise Nervous Goats, because the goats' myotonic condition resembles dancing; and

WHEREAS, the General Assembly wishes to join in this worthy celebration of the panoramic saga that is the Tennessee Fainting Goat, the pride of Marshall County, while also promoting the consumption of goat meat, which has been enjoyed by many of the Volunteer State's favorite sons and military heroes, including General Andrew Jackson, the Seventh

President of the United States and Hero of the Battle of New Orleans; Colonel David Crockett who gave his life at the Alamo for Texas Independence; Confederate General Nathan Bedford Forrest, the South's greatest military leader in the War for Southern Independence; and Sergeant Alvin C. York, the Pacifist who became the greatest American hero of the first World War; and

WHEREAS, on October 11, 2003, Lewisburg, Tennessee will not be a place for the faint of heart, but it will be *the* location of choice for the legion who love and appreciate the Tennessee Fainting Goat, and its many valuable contributions to our State's economy, history and heritage; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby honor and recognize the First Annual Goats, Music & More Festival; commend its organizers for bringing the tale of the Tennessee Fainting Goat to the front of the public consciousness; and urge all Tennesseans to throw caution to the wind and join in this worthy celebration of Marshall County's world-famous Fainting Goat.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this Body directs Representative Joe Fowlkes and Senator Bill Ketron to personally present a copy of this resolution to the organizers of the Goats, Music & More Festival and deliver a report to the General Assembly on the status of Nervous Goats in Tennessee no later than January 1, 2004.